

Message Text

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ACTION OS-01

INFO OCT-01 NEA-06 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 CU-02 AID-05

CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SP-02 SAM-01 /044 W

----- 025006

R 240450Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9650

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 JIDDA 7500

E.O.: 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGEN, SA

SUBJ: AMERICAN SCHOOLS IN SAUDI ARABIA

PLEASE READ TEXT THIS TELEGRAM TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS RIYADH SCHOOL AND DHAHRAN ACADEMY, ADDING CAVEAT THAT INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS HIGHLY SENSITIVE AND SHOULD BE HANDLED WITH ALL POSSIBLE DISCRETION. (NOTE MESSAGE BEING POUCHED TO RIYADH FOR MCARTHUR). QUOTE:

THE AMBASSADOR REGRETS THAT REPRESENTATIVES RIYADH AND DHAHRAN WERE UNABLE TO ATTEND MEETING DEC 21 CONCERNING SCHOOLING IN SAUDI ARABIA. THE AMBASSADOR DESCRIBED TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JIDDA COMMUNITY HIS RECENT MEETING WITH PRINCE SULTAN, CONCERNING THE STATUS OF SAG'S PLANS FOR THE SCHOOLING OF FOREIGNERS IN THE KINGDOM. PRINCE SULTAN PRESENTED A MEMORANDUM DEALING WITH THE ISSUE OF FOREIGN SCHOOLING INCLUDING A SERIES OF RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO HOW SCHOOLING SHOULD BE HANDLED. THE PROPOSAL WAS SUBSEQUENTLY APPROVED AT THE CONCIL OF MINISTER'S MEETING ON DECEMBER 17 AND WILL BE SENT TO THE KING FOR SIGNATURE, PROBABLY IN MID-JANUARY.

SULTAN TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THE BASIC IDEA OF THE MEMORANDUM WAS TO SET UP A MODEL, WESTERN-STYLE INSTITUTE IN RIYADH, WITH BRANCHES IN JIDDA AND DHAHRAN FOR THE EDUCATION OF NON-

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MUSLIM FOREIGNERS IN THE KINGDOM. THE SAG WOULD PROVIDE LAND

AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. THE PHYSICAL PLANTS SHOULD BE FIRST RATE, THE ACADEMIC CURRICULUM SHOULD BE EXCELLENT, AND STUDENTS MUST BE ABLE TO LEAVE AT ANY TIME AND RE-ENTER THEIR OWN SCHOOL SYSTEMS WITHOUT ANY LOSS OF CREDIT. SULTAN WAS EMPHATIC THAT ONLY NON-MUSLIMS WOULD BE ALLOWED TO ATTEND. ONCE THESE INSTITUTES WERE ESTABLISHED, HE THOUGHT IT LIKELY THAT NO OTHER FOREIGN SCHOOLS WOULD BE ALLOWED TO OPERATE WITHIN THE KINGDOM. HE STRESSED THAT THE SAG FELT IT IMPORTANT THE SCHOOLS FOLLOW A CURRICULUM THAT WAS PURELY SECULAR IN NATURE, WITH NO MISSIONARY OR RELIGIOUS OVERTONES.

SULTAN SAID THE SCHOOLS WOULD BE RUN UNDER THE GENERAL BUT DISTANT SUPERVISION OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION. THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL RUNNING THE SCHOOL WOULD BE COMPOSED EQUALLY OF AMERICAN PARENTS AND SYMPATHETIC, EXPERT, SAUDI EDUCATORS.

WITH REGARD TO SEGREGATION BY SEX, SULTAN SAID THAT ONE THIS POINT, AS ON MOST OTHER ONES CONNECTED WITH RUNNING THE SCHOOL, HIS PROPOSAL WAS MEANT TO RESTRICT THE OPERATIONS AND DECISIONS OF THE BOARD AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE. IT WAS HIS PERSONAL JUDGMENT THAT A MIXTURE OF THE SEXES WOULD PROBABLY BE TOLERABLE FROM KINDERGARDEN ON UNTIL THE CHILDREN WERE ABOUT TEN YEARS OLD. AFTER THAT, HE THOUGHT THERE MIGHT BE MERIT TO THE EDUCATIONAL TRACTS BEING SEPARATED, BUT AGAIN NOTED THAT HE AND HIS FELLOW PLANNERS WANTED THE SCHOOL BOARDS TO BE ABLE TO OPERATE WITH A MAXIMUM OF ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY AND A MINIMUM OF RECOURSE TO THE SAG.

REGARDING THE ROLE OF ARABIC LANGUAGE AND AREA STUDIES IN THE CURRICULUM, PRINCE SULTAN DREW THE AMBASSADOR'S ATTENTION TO THE RECOMMENDATION IN THE MINISTERIAL PROPOSAL THAT "THE PROGRAMS OF THESE SCHOOLS SHOULD INCLUDE IN AN APPROPRIATE MEASURE (STUDY OF) THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE KINGDOM AND ITS CIVILIZATION". HE EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO DESIRE TO SADDLE FOREIGN STUDENTS WITH STUDIES THAT WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL TO THEM UNPON RETURNING TO SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN.

THE AMBASSADOR THANKED SULTAN FOR WHAT APPEARED TO BE A GENEROUS, PRACTICAL, AND FAR-SEEING PROPOSAL. CITING THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BAD EXPERIENCE OF THE SCHOOL IN KUWAIT--WHOSE STANDARDS HAVE FALLEN AS THE GOK MORE AND MORE MOVED TO PRESCRIBE FOR SCHOOL REGULATIONS AND CURRICULUM--THE AMBASSADOR SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT THE SCHOOL KEEP AS MUCH AUTONOMY IN ITS INTERNAL AFFAIRS AS POSSIBLE. SULTAN AGREED. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED THA THE PRINCE INFORM HIM AS SOON AS THE APPROVAL OF HIS MAJESTY HAD BEEN RECEIVED. HE POINTED OUT TO PRINCE SULTAN THAT THE HOUR WAS ALREADY EXCEEDINGLY LATE IF THE FOREIGN COMMUNITY

WAS TO MAKE PROVISION BETWEEN NOW AND NEXT SEPTEMBER FOR A RECORD NUMBER OF STUDENTS. HE ASKED IN PARTICULAR THAT PRINCE SULTAN DESIGNATE SOME RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL WITH WHOM AMERICAN COMMUNITY LEADERS COULD IMMEDIATELY BEGIN TO PLAN FOR THE 1975-1976 SCHOOL YEAR. SULTAN SAID THAT HE WOULD DO SO. END QTE.

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INFO OCT-01 NEA-06 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 CU-02 AID-05

CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SP-02 SAM-01 /044 W

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R 240450Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9651

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3. EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF "PRECEPTS FOR A FOREIGN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN SAUDI ARABIA" FOLLOW: QUOTE:

1. THE EDUCATION OF THE CHILDREN OF THE FOREIGN COMMUNITIES IN THE SAUDI ARABIAN KINGDOM WILL NOT BE SUBJECT TO THE SUPERVISION OF ANY FOREIGN AUTHORITY.

2. IN ITS ORGANIZATION, THIS SCHOOL MUST RESPECT THE RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL VALUES OF THE KINGDOM. IN ITS CURRICULA, AND IN ITS INSTRUCTION, IT SHOULD NOT TOUCH UPON ANYTHING WHICH WOULD CONTRAVENE THESE VALUES.

3. THIS SCHOOL IS ONLY FOR THE CHILDREN OF ALL OF THE NON-MUSLIM COMMUNITIES LIVING IN THE KINGDOM. NO MUSLIM CHILDREN MAY BE ADMITTED.

4. THE SCHOOL IS COMPLETELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF ALL THE CHILDREN OF THE NON-MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN THE KINGDOM. NO OTHER SCHOOLS MAY BE SET UP IN THE KINGDOM FOR THE SAME

PURPOSE.

5. THE CURRICULUM OF THIS SCHOOL, SHOULD INCLUDE, TO THE APPROPRIATE EXTENT, (INSTRUCTION) IN THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE KINGDOM AND ITS CIVILIZATION.

6. THE GOVERNMENT WILL PROVIDE THE NECESSARY LAND TO SET LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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UP THE SCHOOL; IT WILL PROVIDE ASSISTANCE EACH YEAR BY MEANS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PARTICIPATION IN THE COSTS OF OPERATION.

7. THIS SCHOOL WILL BE ADMINISTERED BY AN ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL; BY A DECISION OF THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, THE MEMBERSHIP OF THIS COUNCIL WILL VARY FROM EIGHT TO TWELVE WITH HALF ITS MEMBERS TO BE SELECTED FROM THE PARENTS OF THE STUDENTS; THE COUNCIL WILL BE HEADED BY ONE OF THE OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION.

8. THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL WILL APPOINT A DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE SCHOOL WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION.

9. THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE SCHOOL WILL BE IN RIYADH, AND IT WILL HAVE TWO BRANCHES, ONE IN THE CITY OF JIDDA, AND THE OTHER IN DHAHRAN, IN THE EASTERN PROVINCE.

10. THE ACCEPTANCE OF UNCONDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS WOULD CONFLICT WITH THE GOALS OF THE SCHOOL BY VIRTUE OF THE DECISION OF THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, BASED UPON THE GUIDANCE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL.

11. WITHOUT CONTRAVENTION OF THE CONTENTS OF PARAGRAPH TWO ABOVE, THE PLANNING AND CURRICULA OF THIS SCHOOL SHALL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH RECOGNIZED INTERNATIONAL LEVELS OF SCHOOLING SO THAT THE SCHOOL MIGHT ASSURE THAT ITS BOY AND GIRL STUDENTS CAN (EASILY) RE-ENTER THE SCHOOLS IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES.

12. THE SCHOOL WILL BE RUN BY AN ORDINANCE SUGGESTED BY THE SCHOOL'S ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL AND APPROVED BY THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION. THE ORDINANCE WILL BE FORMALLY APPROVED BY A DECISION OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES MENTIONED ABOVE; THIS ORDINANCE WILL LIKEWISE COVER THE EDUCATION, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THIS SCHOOL. END QUOTE.

THE AMBASSADOR ANTICIPATES THAT PRINCE SULTAN WILL NAME SAG'S

REPRESENTATIVE IN EARLY JANUARY AND THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JIDDA, RIYADH, AND DHAHRAN SCHOOL BOARDS WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH HIM IMMEDIATELY UPON HIS APPOINTMENT. THE

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AMBASSADOR THEREFORE SUGGESTS THAT EACH SCHOOL BOARD PREPARE
A SUMMARY OF ITS SCHOOL NEEDS FOR PRESENTATION TO THE SAG
REPRESENTATIVE IN EARLY JANUARY, INCLUDING NUMBER OF TEACHERS,
SUPPLIES, AMOUNT OF LAND, SIZE OF PLANT AND NUMBER OF CLASS-
ROOMS, ESTIMATED COSTS, AND PROBLEMS ANTICIPATED TO HANDLE
1) THE SCHOOL POPULATION OF SEPTEMBER 1975 AND 2) THE SCHOOL
POPULATION PROJECTED OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: shawdg
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974JIDDA07500
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740373-1054
From: JIDDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741213/aaaaakjf.tel
Line Count: 237
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION OS
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: shawdg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 AUG 2002 by WorrelSW>; APPROVED <19 MAR 2003 by shawdg>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMERICAN SCHOOLS IN SAUDI ARABIA PLEASE READ TEXT THIS TELEGRAM TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS RIYADH
TAGS: OGEN, SA
To: DHAHRAN
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005